

REMARKS

By the present amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

Summary of the Amendments

By the foregoing amendment, claims 1-8 and 14 are canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the canceled claims in a continuing and/or divisional application, if Applicants so choose, and Applicant does not intend to dedicate any of the canceled subject matter to the public. Claims 9-13 remain pending. Of the pending claims, claim 9 is independent.

Further, any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 9-13 are allowed. Therefore, in order to advance the prosecution of this application, Applicants have canceled claims 1-8 and 14, and respectfully request that claims 9-13 pass to issue.

Response to Rejections**1. Response to Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)**

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 4,061,698 ("THORNWALD").

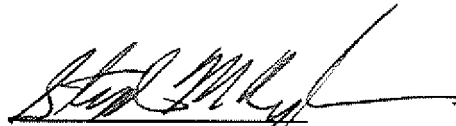
In response to the anticipation rejection, Applicants have canceled claims 1-8 without prejudice, disclaimer or waiver, in order to further advance the prosecution of this application, in view of the Examiner's indication that claims 9-13 are allowed. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of claims 1-8 as being unpatentable over THORNWALD.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that claims 9-13 pass to issue as the Final Office Action dated August 15, 2006 has stated that claims 9-13 are allowed.

Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mitsuru CHIBA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce H. Bernstein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

Stephen M. Roylance
Reg. No. 31,296

September 22, 2006
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191

{P26589 00059101.DOC}